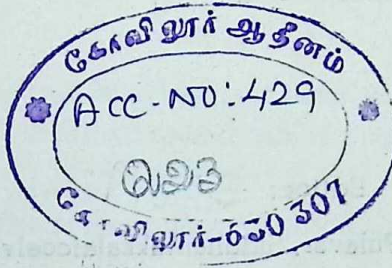


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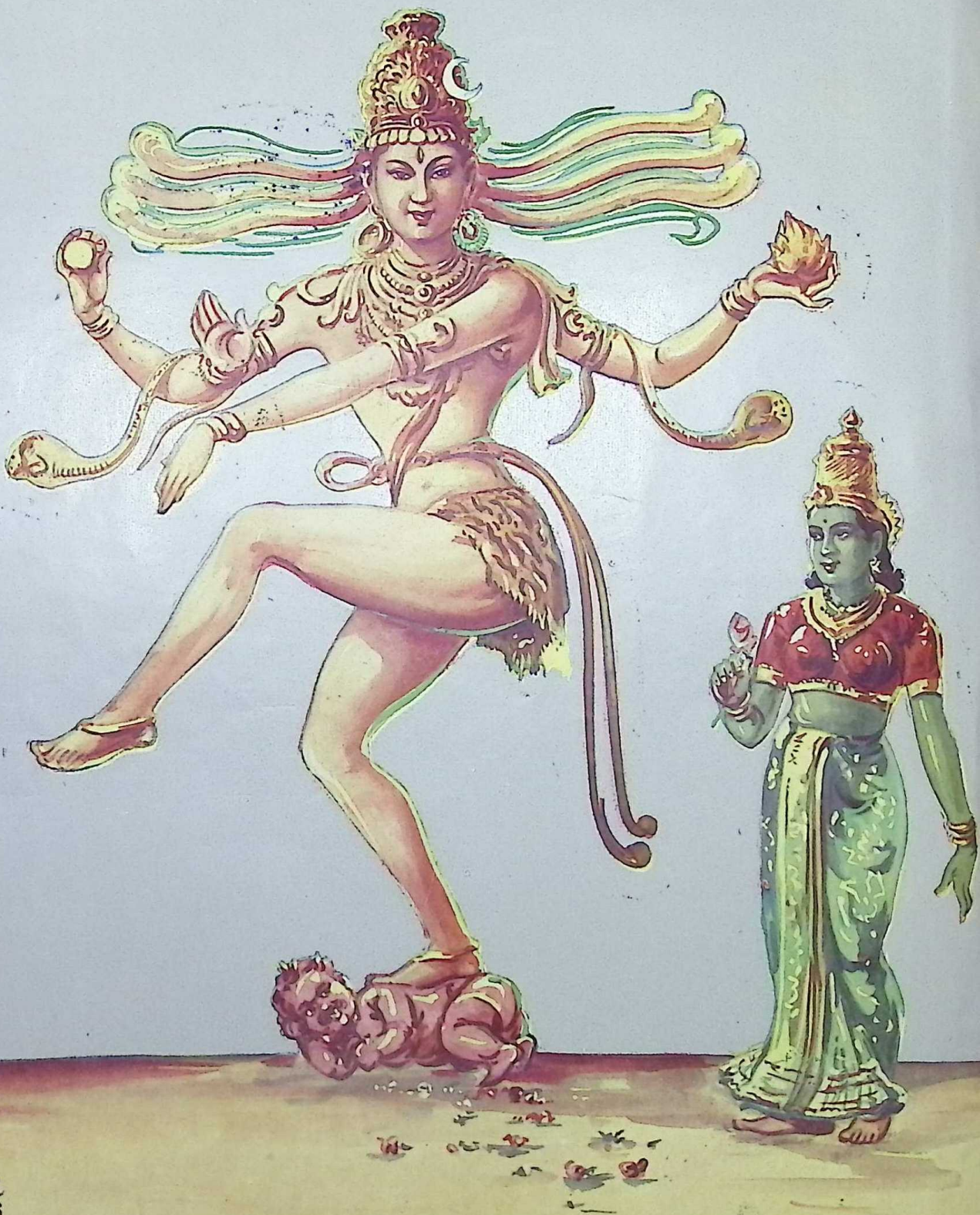
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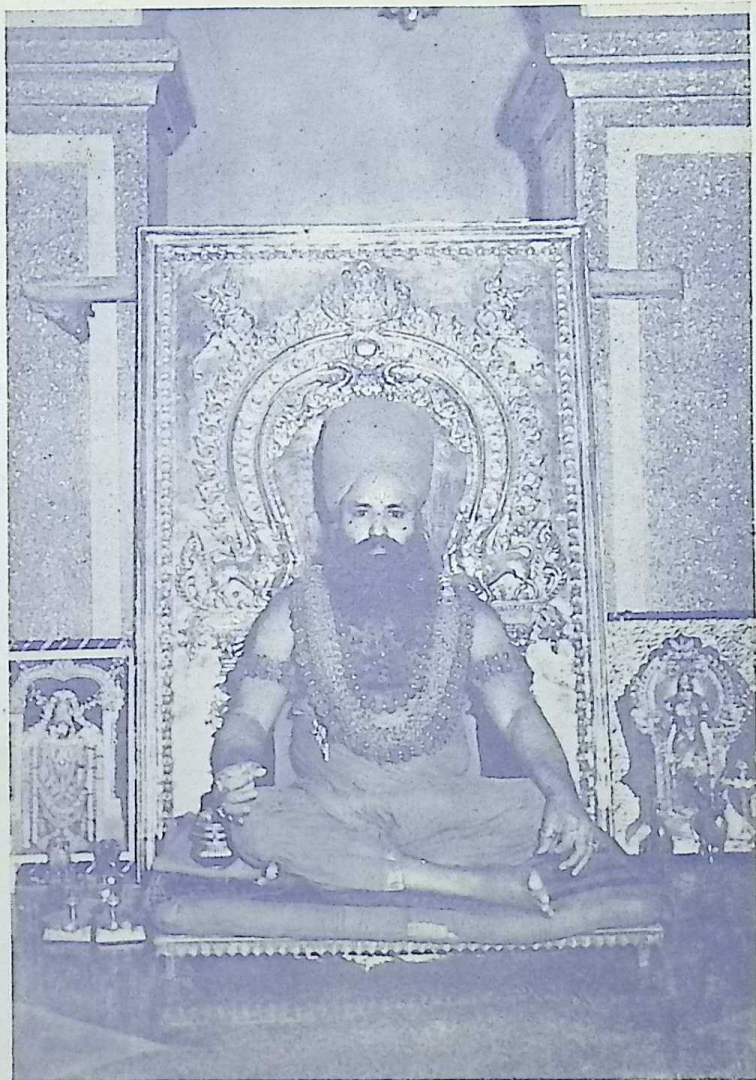


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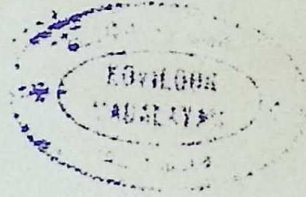
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Dharmapuram Adhinam





His Holiness
Sri-la-Sri Kailai Subramania Desika Gnanasambanda
Paramacharya Swamigal,
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DEDICATION
DHARMAPURAM ADHINAM

DHARMAPURAM, MAYURAM

Thanjavur District, Tamilnadu,

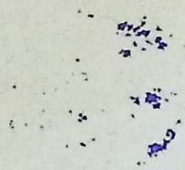
Dedicated

To

The II International Tamil Conference - Seminar

held at Madras

in January 1968.



NOTATION
OF THE
RECORDS
OF THE
OFFICE
OF THE
SECRETARY
OF THE
TREASURY
OF THE
UNITED STATES
OF AMERICA
FOR THE
YEAR
1880

First Edition - 1968

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Editor:

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V. R. Nedunchezhiyan,
Minister for Education,
Industries & Religious Endowments.

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Madras-9.
2nd January, 1968.

FOREWORD

" To Him Who hath nor name nor form nor action,
A thousand sacred names sing we."

This is the truth expahsised by Saint Manickavasagar.

If only we all realise this great truth, there will not be any religious quarrels and disputes. This truth also indicates that the various philosophies of religion have developed only according to man's aptitudes and inclinations. If we all fully understand and realise the great truth enunciated by Saint Manickavasagar as above, our social life will be harmonious and according to the tenets of Tirukkural.

I wish that publications as the present, namely "Saiva Siddhanta", will serve the people on the above lines.

(Sd.) V. R. Nedunchezhiyan

a
Gurupadam

Publishers' Note

The thought of the II-International Conference - Seminar is a source of pride, pleasure, and Jubilation for everyone in Tamizhakam.

Tamizh is the most ancient living language in the world. People who speak the language are spread all over the world, especially, Burma, Ceylon, South East Asia, Africa and other places. Tamil culture is neither aggressive nor submissive. It is an enlightened one contributing to individual contentment and social harmony; it has all the disciplines and good elements that are born of long standing tradition. Now it is a matter for happiness and pride that it should be discussed in an International Conference - Seminar attended by the learned representatives of forty Nations of the World, which privilege seems to have been enjoyed by no other language till now. It is in the fitness of things that such an important Conference - Seminar be held this year in the capital city of Tamizhakam. We feel proud and are glad to extend a hearty welcome to the world delegates.

Everyone has been trying to contribute something towards the success of the Conference in some way or other. "Tamizh", at any time in the past, especially in the present, is a word to conjure with, and it is so with the enlightened public as well as the masses.

We of the Adhinam who are wedded to calm and cool thinking and charged with the responsibility of preserving and disseminating the best in the Tamizh Culture are also naturally interested in the Seminar and seeing that the erudite Scholars who come from all places of the world are given a picture of Tamizh culture and its tradition.

This Adhinam has ever been associating itself with the good forces of the world in leading men, as the ancient wisdom dictates, from darkness to light, from things ephemeral to permanent ones, to communion with the inner presence of Bliss.

The present Spiritual Head of the Adhinam, it is the good fortune of Tamizhakam whose real soul the Saiva Adhinams are, is keenly interested in giving concrete shape to the ideals and in extending the boundaries of the humanistic activities of the Adhinam. It is because of this spirit, His Holiness undertook pilgrimage to all holy places in India crowning it with a visit to Mount Kayilas in Tibet during a critical period when there were border troubles, as the last party to visit the place. Thus the appellation Tirukkayilaya Paramparai (coming of the spiritual lineage from Siva of the Mount Kailas) of the Adhinam has become true not only in tradition, but in practice as well.

His Holiness at first thought it fit to give a lucid exposition of the Saiva - Siddhanta Religion and Philosophy in Tamizh in the hands of the world delegates. This is done by securing the services of this Adhina Vidwan Thiru S. Arunaivadivelu Mudaliar and a lucid prose work in Tamizh of moderate size has seen the light of day.

At the same time, His Holiness has been thinking of bringing out a brochure in English. After some deliberation, His Holiness was pleased to entrust the work in the hands of Thiru K. Vajravelu Mudaliar, B. A., L. T., retired Headmaster of the well reputed Pachaiyapp's High School, Kanchipuram. He has been a student of Tamil, Sanskrit and Saiva Siddhanta from his young days and has been connected with our Adhinam for the past thirty five years and more. He has delivered lectures on Saiva Siddhanta at Banares Hindu University and Allahabad University under the endowment scheme instituted by Tiruppanandal Sri Kasi Mutt in the Annamalai University. He has also won the appreciation of the Government of India in his services and was the recipient of the Annual National Award for teachers in 1964.

He has given a lucid outline of Saiva - Siddhanta in the following pages.

We are delighted to place this script dealing with the religious philosophy of the Tamils in the hands of the learned delegates so that they may read, appreciate and take interest in studying the Original works on the system which are classic in themselves,

We wish to state that Navalar Thiru V. R. Nedunchezhiyan, M. A., the Hon'ble Minister for Education and Hindu Religious Endowments of Tamizhakam has been pleased to give us a valuable Foreword for the script. This Foreword has more than ordinary significance because the Hon'ble Minister himself is a learned scholar deeply interested in preserving the ancient Tamizh culture in its pristine purity and spreading its glory in our own land and in other countries. The blessings of His Holiness Sri-la-Sri Kayilai Guru Mahasannidanam are due to him.

We wish the Tamil Conference-Seminar every success and convey the blessings of His Holiness to the distinguished delegates and all those who are connected with the seminar as well as the writer of this script.

We have to say that the short space of time available for us did not allow us to give a more detailed account of this system of thought, which is the very essence of the Tamizh language and literature.

SAIVA - SIDDHANTA

1. What is Saiva-Siddhanta ?

O. (o.) Saiva-Siddhanta is the religio-philosophic system which names the god-head as Sivam in preference to any other term. It may be called the South Indian Phase of Saivism, for it is only in South India and North Ceylon that the system of thought is preserved and practised in its pristine purity and glory by the vast majority of people.

O. (1.) It is a highly rational and practical system of ethics, religion, and philosophy. It is mono-theistic and pluralistic in character and realistic in approach. Its distinguishing features are simplicity, comprehensiveness, self-consistency and broad out-look. It has the rare inherent quality of reconciling and harmonising the diverse expressions or records of spiritual and religious experiences of the man-kind.

2. The implication of the name :

I. (o.) God is one and is admittedly nameless and formless, but men have given him name and form, not only to suit their needs and tastes, but also in accordance with their ideals and experiences. Saint Manikkavacakar sings;

"

To Him Who hath nor name nor form nor action
A thousand sacred names sing we ". *

* ஒருநாமம் ஒருருவம் ஒன்றும் இல்லாற்குஆயிரம்
திருநாமம் பாடிநாம் தெள்ளேணங் கொட்டாமோ !

1. (1) It has been the experience of God-men who have vouchsafed this system to humanity that the Supreme Being is auspicious (i. e., immutable and everlasting), blissful and of pure consciousness. In order to signify this fact, they called Him Sivam and adopted the word as a mystic spell of very high efficacy.

The above mentioned qualities are immaterial ones and are characteristic of the Supreme Being, whose form is pure effulgence of grace. Sivam means all this.

1. (2.) It is also within their experience that every living being is inseparably related to the Supreme Being as the psycho-physical organism (body) is to its soul (the individual-self). Every living being is potentially capable of realising and experiencing the Bliss of the Supreme while even in this world. So the religious aspect of the system is termed Saivam. SAIVAM means related to Sivam.

1. (3.) In this sense, every living-being is Saivam i.e., related to Sivam.* But, in as much as all do not recognise this relation, it is only those that recognise this and follow its implications are called Saivas or Saivites.

*தெய்வம் சிவமே; சிவன் அருள் சமயம்
சைவம்; சிவத்தொடு சம்பந்தம் என்னுள்

—Tiru-c-cendur Akaval.

நின்றனவும் சரிப்பனவும் சைவமேயாம்
நிலைமை அவர்க்(கு)அருள் செய்து சண்பை வேந்தர்
... ..தாவில் சரா சரங்கள் எலாம்
சிவம்பெருக்கும் பிள்ளையார்.

—Periyapuram, Tirugnanasambandar - 926 & 26.

Ica vasyam idam sarvam—Icavasyopnishad

1. (4.) The term Saivam, when applied to the religion, implies that the religious thought has been specially revealed by Siva, who is considered to be the source and author of all branches of knowledge (Icanās sarva vidyanam).

1. (5.) It will be informing and instructive to note that the idea of the Supreme Spirit being the self of the selves is a basic one. It constitutes the very foundation of the ethical and philosophical structures of this system. Universal love is insisted on in this religion on this very basis. The supreme commandment of the religion is:

* "Remember Siva is the indweller of every living-being and be loving towards every one of them."

1. (6) The term Siddhanta conveys the philosophic aspect of the system. It is a compound of the words, Siddha, and Antam. The first word means obtained (after enquiry), and the second means The End or The Conclusion. The term as a whole means The Final Result of Enquiry or The True End.

1. (7) The term suggests that the truths expressed in this system are not only supported by the accepted scriptural authority but also verifiable by experience. Hence it implies that this school of thought is not just one school among others, but it is the perfect one par-excellence.

3. The fundamental concepts :

2. (o.) Saiva-Siddhanta recognises three eternal categories viz., God, Soul, and Bondage. These are denoted by the terms Pati, Pacu, and Pacam respectively.

* எவ்வுயிரும் நீங்கா(து) உறையும் இறைசிவன்என்(று)
எவ்வுயிர்க்கும் அன்பாய் இரு.

— சைவசமயநெறி.

2. (1) God is the Supreme Spirit, self-existent and self-knowing, untainted and unaffected by the changing nature, which He controls and governs. He is full of love and grace, and He informs and redeems the souls. He stands in relation to His consciousness-force (called Cit-Cakti) as the magnet to its field of attractive and repulsive forces or as the Sun to its field of attractive and radiant forces. Even as the Sun has all its planets confined to its field of attraction and keeps them under its control, so also God has the two other categories confined to His all-pervasive Consciousness-force and keeps them under His control. The Supreme Spirit is not away from the Universe; but it is the mainstay of it, SARFU (சர்பு) in the words of Thiruvalluvar.

2. (2) Souls are sentient beings, countless in number. They require to be informed and energised by the Consciousness-force of God. Though they are self-conscious entities, their intellect is covered with and limited by an inherent precosmic evil called ANAVA, the spiritual dirt or darkness. This spiritual dirt is removable. For the removal of this, God has bestowed on the bound souls the phycho-physical organism called body, and has placed them in the orbit of birth and death in Nature, subject to her inexorable laws.

This system indicates the purpose of Creation, which is not given in other systems.

2. (3) Bondage consists of 3 principles.

They are :-

(i) The spiritual darkness or dirt, called Anava, or mula malam, (ii) Nature and her substantial cause called MAYA, and (iii) the moral law that governs the actions of the soul when in conjunction with the body and the external nature. In relation to the moral law the actions of the soul are called VINAI or Karma.

2. (4) It is interesting to note that these principles of bondage are recognised by Thirukkural and are referred to by the terms IRUL (இருள்), MARUL (மருள்), and VINAI (வினை) respectively. *

4. Relationships between the entities :-

3. (o.) The relationship between God and his Consciousness-force is known as TADATMYA. Duality in unity (ஒருமையின் இருமை). It is the relation that exists between a substance and its quality or between the whole and its part. Pure consciousness is the very form and quality of God. It has three aspects Viz., knowing, willing, and loving. This Consciousness-force is called the Light of Grace (அருள் ஒளி).

3. (1) The Soul or the individual-self is also conceived as having two aspects. One is the self-conscious aspect and the other is the aspect of being conscious of other objects. The first aspect is called self (atma); the second is its consciousness-force (cit-cakti). The relationship between the individual-self and its consciousness-force is also one of duality in unity as in the case of the Supreme Spirit and Its Consciousness-force. God's consciousness-force is infinite, pure, and unhindered; but that of the soul is finite, tainted by egoism, and limited by the bondage.

* இருள்சேர் இருவினையும் சேரா இறைவன்
பொருள்சேர் புகழ்புரிந்தார் மாட்டு

— Tirukkural-5.

இருள்நீங்கி இன்பம் பயக்கும் மருள்நீங்கி
மாசறு காட்சி யவர்க்கு—

— Tirukkural-352.

பொருளல்ல வற்றைப் பொருளென்று உணரும்
மருளான் ஆம் மாணப் பிறப்பு.

— Tirukkural-351.

3. (2) The relationship between God and souls is inseparable togetherness or UNITY IN DUALITY (இருமையின் ஒருமை). This relationship is like the one which exists between the 'perceptive power of the eye and the souls' power of cognition while in the act of perception. This is Ananya or Advitiya or Advaita in the conventional terminology of Saiva Siddhanta.

5. Two important texts from Thirumantiram :

4. (o.) The earliest work in Tamil, which presents in full all the principles of the theory and practice of the Saiva-Siddhanta system, is Tirumantira Malai by Tirumular, the mighty Saint of mystic science. It is a treatise of 3000 stanzas. It should have been the only guide to the Saivites during the dark period of South Indian history (3rd to the 6th century A. D.). It is a fact of history that during that period wave after wave of Buddhistic and Jain missionaries swept over South India and disseminated their teachings. Saivism was at peril. Its very existence was at stake.

4. (1) How their challenge was met and overcome will be dealt with later.

4. (2) It seems that the name Saiva-Siddhanta occurs for the first time in this treatise.

4. (3) One stanza says : Since Salvation is attained only in Siddhanta, those who follow it will surely get release while even in human existence; as it is the quintessence of the Vedanta, ‡ Vedanta as interpreted by it will reveal Siva. *

‡ The word *Vedanta* denotes the Upanishads, not Sankara's philosophy of Monism.

* சித்தாந்தத் தேசீவன் முத்திசித் தித்தலால்
சித்தாந்தத் தேநிற்பர் முத்திசித்தித்தவர்
சித்தாந்தம் வேதாந்தச் செம்பொரு ளாதலால்
சித்தாந்த வேதாந்தங் காட்டுஞ் சிவனையே - 2394

Here it may be noted that there was an attempt at effecting reconciliation between the import of the Vedic texts and that of the Agamic texts.

4. (4) In another stanza the author defines ideal Saiva-Siddhantins ;

" Those are Saiva Siddhantins, who, attaining the eternal feet of God by means of a study of pertinent scriptures and worthy practice, dispel the dirt of egoism, perceive the Super-soul and become established in It," ‡

4. (5) Parallel expressions from Tirukkural will conduce to a better understanding of the purport of the above statement. Incidentally it will throw some light on the moorings of Thirukkural.

(a) What use is their learning, if they do not worship the feet of Him who is pure Intelligence ? (2)

(b) None can swim the great sea of births but those who have attained the feet of the All-Pervasive. (10)

(c) He who cuts off the egoism of I and Mine will enter the world beyond the Gods. (346)

‡ கற்பன கற்றுக் கலைமன்னு மெய்யோக
முற்பத ஞானம் முறைமுறை நண்ணியே
தொற்பதம் மேவித் துரிசற்று மேலான
தற்பரம் கண்டுளோர் சைவசித்தாந்தரே

— Tirumanthiram 1042.

(d) Even perfect control of the five senses is of no use if one attaineth not enlightenment. (354)

(e) Enlighenment consists in the direct perception of the changeless True Being which causes Heaven, dispelling the folly that causes births. (358)

6. The highest objective in life :

5. (0.) It will be seen from the above quotations that the two great seers, Tirumular and Tiruvalluvar, set forth realisation of God - Head as the highest objective of human aspirations, and have surely and firmly laid the path of realisation.

5. (1) It should be noted here that, in their scheme of human conduct and life, other objectives (or high values) such as Individual Contentment, Social Harmony, and Ethical Perfection are only the stepping stones to the above supreme objective, the highest value in life.

7. The path of realisation :

6. (0) The description of the Saiva Siddhantins quoted above not only sets the ultimate goal for the onward march of the self in its spiritual ascension, but also indicates the mile stones on the way to realisation. A brief account of the path of realisation is attempted here.

6. (1) The chief instrument or source of all our knowlege is our own inherent power to know. This is called Atma Citcakti or self's consciousness-force. But this consciousness-force does not directly contact the external world. It works through the psycho-physical organism, which we call our body. Our body is the medium through which we receive the impressions of the stimuli that are caused by the external

world. The atma - cit - sakti receives the impressions through the sense - organs and interprets them by relating them to the past memories. Mind and its modalities, intellect, ego and memory, are the aids for the cit - cakti in the process of interpretation or Judgement.

6. (2) Epistemology recognizes three principal modes of acquiring knowledge. These are the immediate (காட்சி or Pratyaksha), inference (கருதல் or Anumana) and scripture (உரை or Agama). But all these means are only aids or accessories to our consciousness-force. Knowledge gained through such means is called Pasa jnana, objective knowledge of the lowest level. But it should be remembered that in all acts of the self's cognition, the Supreme Self is always the prime mover, being immanent in the individual-self.

6. (3) The first step in the path of realization is the self's introspection of its own true nature under the guidance of the spiritual preceptor. This introspection will enable the individual to objectify and discriminate the various modes of objective consciousness, which are caused by the various psycho-physical adjuncts, (such as, sense-organs, mind, intellect, ego, memory, etc.) They constitute the five Kosas (sheaths) of the Taittiriya Upanishad, or to use a collective name, body. The self discriminates them as being different from (Neti -as not this) itself. Thus the self gets itself detached from the material adjuncts and gains purity, being free from the bondage. This process is the first step in the spiritual ascension, Tatvasuddhi or partial purgation.

6. (4) In this almost pure state of consciousness, the Divine Grace, which is termed Sat by the Vedas and the Upanishads, manifests itself as Sun's light in a crystal; and the self finds itself as the Absolute, transcending the external Universe and its time-space relations. The individual self now asserts, "I am Brahman".

6. (5) This Aham Brahmasmi experience is only an intermediate stage, this is called Atma rupa, the second step in the spiritual rising.

The knowledge based on this experience is called Pacu Jnana, for it is caused by the residual influence of Anava, the principle of egoism (Pacuttva vadanai). It is the lingering egoistic tendency of the self that makes it oblivious of the presence of the Supreme, which has always been, and in fact still is, the mainstay or sarpu.

6. (6) The next step for the aspirant is to realise the presence of the Supreme, underlying this experience. At this stage some mystics feel that they are quite different from the Absolute, the Siva Caitanya; but still they think they can do all that is being done by the Lord. This is called Siva Samavada jnanam, knowledge that asserts, 'I am equal to Siva'. This is Atma Darsana, the third step. However both the kinds of experience in the forms, I am Brahman and I am equal to Brahman, are classed under Pasu jnana, for they are contaminated by the Evil-directed functions of I and mine (Yan and Enatu) which are to be rooted out, being the effects of the precosmic evil.*

6. (7) In between the second and third steps there dawns on the self an aspect of spirit-directed consciousness cleansing the Aham Brahmasmi jnana. This is called Siva Rupa, the perception of the light of grace or the feet of God, in a general manner.

6. (8) Now beyond this, the self must realise that it has no existence independent of the grace of the Supreme, and no action other than spirit-directed. This realisation is Siva Darsana, a clear perception of the light of grace or the feet of God. After this the Supreme descends on the individual self as the light of the dawn in the sky. Here the self is completely cleansed of the residual influence of bondage and this stage is called Atma Suddhi (purgation complete). Siva Rupa and Siva Darsana constitute partial illumination.

* பிறப்பென்னும் பேதைமை நீங்கச் சிறப்பென்னும்
செம்பொருள் காண்ப(து) அறிவு.

6. (9) At this stage the self completely merges itself in the resplendent light of grace of the Supreme. This is Siva Yoga, complete illumination. Here, only the rays of Bliss (Sukha Prabha) are said to be experienced by the soul. Hereafter there should be no effort on the part of the individual self to cognise or unite. The self entirely surrenders itself to the Supreme as His instrument or medium for His own gracious function. A released soul should never come down from this spiritual level, lest it should be influenced by the gravitation of the mundane and brought down to the orbit of birth and death. At this level of consciousness the soul has realised the Cakthi aspect of God. This state is called Turiya state, the fourth level in the released state.

6. (10) At this spiritual level, the light of grace or Cakti reveals the Supreme in the form of eternal, all-pervasive Bliss, enveloping the self. This is Siva-Bhoga, which is also termed Atma Labha, the highest value. This is like the perception of the Sun through its own rays. This is Union, the final, changeless state of supreme bliss. It is called Turiya Atita state or simply Atita.

6. (11) Here the support and guide for the self's consciousness-force is the Light of grace itself, and the fully released soul identifies itself with the Supreme. The self is conscious of the Supreme in the form of supreme bliss, being in it and of it. Spiritual knowledge gained through the eye of grace while experiencing the last two levels of pure consciousness, viz., turiya and atita states, is called Sivajnana or enlightenment (Meyyunarvu). All kinds of other knowledge are considered to be inferior or defective. This is the Absolute and Independent knowledge according to Saiva-Siddhanta; before this steady knowledge, the so-called absolute or intuitional knowledge of Sankara vanishes as Pasujnana, as one of the phases of ignorance. In fact Tiruvalluvar uses the word Petaimai (folly) with respect to the knowledge of the form 'I am the Supreme' or of the form 'I can do even as the Supreme'. *

* பிறப்பென்னும் பேதைமை

(The folly which is the cause of births) — Tiru-k-kural 358.

6. (12) I may here give the translation of the 9th Sutra of Sivajnana Bodham, which shows the path of realisation: 'Realise the Supreme which transcends both Pasujnana and Pasajnana, in your self with the eye of Grace (Siva Jnana); if you regard the world of tattvas and their products as being impermanent and worthless like mirage, you get detached from the bondage and there dawns from within you the Lord's Grace like the cool shade in the oasis, for a man who has walked the sandy desert under the burning Sun. Now, to remain steadfast under the cool shade of the Lord's foot (Sat) without being distracted by the world, meditate on the Sacred Letters Five as enjoined.

"In the flower of soul, bloomed the fragrance of Siva" *

"Consciousness, He said, I am; The Bliss within me, He said, is Siva. What prevented me from knowing myself, He said, is pasa. Whoever has enquired into these three will get liberated." - Guru jnana-Sambandar. ‡

8. Historical background and the sources:

(a) Saṅgam age and before:

7. (O) It has been shown that the name Saiva-Siddhanta was probably used for the first time by Saint Tirumular. Epigraphical evidence shows that the king, Raja Simha - I (690-715 A. D.) called himself, with pride, a follower of SAIVA-SIDDHANTA MARGA. ¶

* சீவனுக்குள்ளே சிவமணம் பூத்தது

— Tirumular Tirumantiram.

‡ என்னை அறிவென்றான் என்னறிவில் ஆனந்தந்
தன்னைச் சிவம் என்றான் சந்ததமும் — என்னைஉன்னிப்
பாரா மறைத்ததுவே பாசம் என்றான் இம்மூன்றும்
ஆராய்ந் தவர்முத்தர் ஆம்.

— Sivabhoga-caram.

¶ South Indian Inscriptions, Vol-I, No. 24.

7. (1) But, as a religious force, this system of thought has its roots in the misty past, which goes far back into the pre-vedic and pre-historic times (5000 B. C.).

7. (2) The findings of the excavations at Mohenjo Daro and Harappa, led Sir John Marshall, the father of Indian Archaeology, to assert that Saivism is the most ancient of all the living religions. Father Heras also arrives at the same conclusion, but by a different mode of approach. He draws his conclusions by an interpretation of the pictographical representations found in the above excavations. It appears that the cardinal principles and practices of the Saiva-Siddhanta system which are capable of formative expression are found expressed in the seals and relics found there.

7. (3) Siva linga, the symbol of Siva as the Supreme Spirit, is said to be one of the findings of the excavations. It is also reported to be found in many places in the world. This shows that the enlightened concept of God-Head as being spiritual effulgence or the source of radiation of the light of Grace might have been a universally accepted one. The sacred books of Saivism and Puranic lore unanimously refer to Sivalinga as the Pillar of Fire. It also facilitates the broad outlook and the wholesome attitude so well expressed in the celestial expression of Saint Manikka-vacakar quoted already, viz., "To Him, who hath nor name nor form nor action sing we a thousand names and beat Tellenam (The drum.)"

7. (4) Thiru-k-kural, the constitution of the Tamil way of life, also shows that the Supreme-Spirit is admittedly formless and nameless, but may be considered to have forms and names consistent with His nature. It does not refer to God by any conventional form or name, but speaks of the feet and the truthful praise of the All-pervasive.

7. (5) The first chapter of Tiru-k-kural, it should be noted, is not invocatory, as many of the religious enthusiasts, including the

learned commentator Parimel Azhakar, seem to take. It is mandatory even as the other chapters on virtue (Aram) are.

7. (6) None of the ten couplets of the first chapter invokes God's grace, or utters a prayer. Among them the first verse aims at convincing the reader as to the existence of the Supreme Spirit, whom we should all obey, worship, and adore. Analogical reasoning is employed, which no work in Tamil had ever done before. It reads thus: "All the letters have A, the first, as their primal cause; (even so) the (visible) world has the the first Lord, as its primal cause." * As this is an inferential proof for the existence of God, as being implied in the evolutionary process of the changing objective world, the name Adi Bagavan cannot import any conventional idea of any particular religious system. It is a general one importing the universal idea of being worshipful and eternal.

7. (7) A careful study of Tiru-k-kural will reveal that the ethical system expounded therein is built on the basis of the fundamental concepts of Saiva-Siddhanta detailed above, though not exactly in the conventional terminology.

7. (8) Sangam literature in Tamil refers to Siva as the Supreme Spirit, though the name Siva is not mentioned. They refer to him as having the female principle as a part of his form and being the primal cause or source of the evolutionary, as well as the involutionary process of the world, as being the spiritual master seated in the shade of the banyan tree and inspiring divine wisdom etc. Temple worship is also mentioned. When the temples of various gods are mentioned, Siva's temple is mentioned first.

* அகர முதல எழுத்தெல்லாம் ஆதி
பகவள் முதற்றே உலகு.

7. (9) A poet Karikizhar, by name, addresses an ancient king Mutukudumi-p-Peruvazhuti who is considered to belong to a period when mount Kumari and river Pahruli in the South were not washed away by the sea. The poet wishes that the royal umbrella of the King may be lowered only when he walks in reverence, round [the temple of the Lord with three eyes (Siva). *

7. (10) It is also clear that the Tamils as a class or race believed in the law of Karma and in the re-incarnation of the selves. Firm belief in the doctrine that all living beings follow the course of life as marked by [their previous [deeds had led learned men to evince a broad outlook on life and live a peaceful, enlightened, and virtuous life. ¶

7. (11) The presence of the Buddhists and the Jains in the Tamil country is indicated rarely in Sangam literature. But the twin epics of Silappadikaram and Manimekalai indicate that Buddhism and Jainism had begun to influence the people. They also show that there were conflicting currents of thoughts. But it may be safely supposed that during the first two centuries of the Christian era there was peaceful co-existence. Under these circumstances it is seen that the greatness of the concept of Siva was not called into question.

Silappadikaram refers to Siva as the great God with form unborn. ‡ It also mentions how ‡ Ceran Cenkuttuvan gave a special place to Lord Siva and considered all other deities including Tiruma

* பணியியர் அத்தைநின் குடையே முனிவர்
முக்கட் செல்வர் நகர்வலஞ் செயற்கே.

— புறநானூறு. 6.

¶ All places are ours, all our kith and kin,
good and evil come, not caused by others, etc.

— Purananuru — 192.

‡ பிறவா யாக்கைப் பெரியோன் கோயிலும்

— சிலப்பதிகாரம்.

(Vishnu) as ordinary Gods. The Cera king thought it improper to place the sacred offerings of Tirumal on his head along with Siva's feet, but placed them on his shoulders only.

7. (12) Manimekalai gives, in chapter 27, an account of all the various schools of thought and religious cults then prevalent. There it gives the concept of God as held by the Saiva-vadin of the period (3rd cent. A. D.).

The concept given and the very name Isan used therein are the very same as are held and used even now.

(b) The need for Devotional Songs and its Fulfilment:

7. (13) The most authoritative and unambiguous sources of the Saiva-Siddhanta system are the Tevara hymns sung by the saintly trio, Sambandar, Appar, and Sundarar, and Tiruvacakam and Tiru-k-kovaiyar vouchsafed by saint Manikkavacakar.

7. (14) Scholars differ in fixing the period of Manikkavacakar. But it appears safer to agree with the traditional view that he preceded the saintly trio.

7. (15) In the poem TIRU ANDA - P - PAKUTI, Manikkavacakar refers to God's appearing to him as the spiritual preceptor in the following manner :-

"The ocean of Supreme Bliss transformed itself into a mighty cloud, climbed the mount of Tiru-P-Perundurai, and caused a mighty flood. The flood watered the fields of worship of the saint-farmers who had sown the seeds of love therein. Thus the rare cloud enabled the peasants to grow the paddy and reap the fruit.



"Before the arrival of the floods, thirsty stags roamed ~~after the~~ mirage-like teachings of the six-systems and became tired and left the place, their thirst being unquenched."

7. (16) This is a clear reference to the condition of the Saint's period before God appeared to him as the Spritual Master.

There were people thirsting for true wisdom, but they were faced with confusing and conflicting views of the diverse systems of thought, which could not bring solace to them.

There were also people, with inherent piety, offering worship at the feet of God; but there were no devotional songs to give meaning and direction to their worship, lift them to the regions of the Supreme, and strengthen and foster their piety so as to consummate in yielding Supreme-Bliss. At such a time, the mighty cloud which could not be obtained on earth, supplied the flood. The implication, is that the supreme need of the time was supplied and fulfilled by the divine grace through the Saint's celestial utterings, which he was obliged and inspired to utter.

The description given above of the period of time does not accord well with any period after the advent of the saintly trio in the Tamil country. It fits in only with a period prior to their advent, which is usually described as the dark period in the history of South India.

The Saint says in one of the poems "Amidst the darkness I hold thee firmly gripped *". Though the Saint refers to the inner darkness, it may as well refer to the darkness of the time.

* Tiruvacakam, 15, 7.

7. (17) Again in the 5th stanza of the Morning song called Tiru-p-palli Ezhuchi, Manikkavacakar addresses Siva thus:— "We have not heard of those who had actually seen you, except for the dances and musical recitals performed by wise men, expressing that you abide in every being and that you have neither exit nor advent".

This statement with respect to men of spiritual experience also does not accord well if the Saint had come to the world after the advent of the authors of the Tevara hymns. For, the years after their advent belong to the golden age, when the life history of the three saints, who had actually seen and described the spiritual form of Siva, was on the lips of the masses in the Tamil Nad.

7. (18) We may also take into consideration the fact that Saint Manikkavacakar refers to Murukan alone as the son of Siva, not Ganesa, and that the other three saints refer freely to Ganesa as well as Murukan.

7. (19) Another point worthy of note is that Sambandar, in the famous hymn called Tiru-P-Pasuram, asserts, with reference to interference with Siva's worship as follows:— "While Candi worshipped Siva's feet with flowers and well-gotten milk, he cut off the revered feet of his father for interference and thereby reached the feet of the three eyed Lord: so we heard Men of Wisdom say".

This is a significant utterance from the mouth of Tirujnana-sambandar.

7. (20) It is highly probable that Sambandar could have referred to the following unique utterance in Tiruvacakam:

"As the guiltless bachelor (i. e. Candecar) cut off both the legs of his father, who was a brahmin as well, but who spoiled the worship offered to Siva, the very sinful act, by the grace of God, brought him salvation so as to be worshipped by Gods"*

7. (21) The above points seem to clinch the question, whereas all other arguments are equally balanced both for and against so as not to be decisive.

7. (22) So we may safely conclude that if Tirumular fulfilled the need for a philosophic work in Tamil for the sincere aspirants during the dark ages, Manikkavacakar supplied the need for devotional literature of exquisite beauty and merit during the same period. We may associate ourselves with the scholars who would assign 4th cent. A. D. to Tirumular and 5th Cent. to Manikkavacakar.

7. (23) By nature Manikkavacakar was more concerned that he should not be forsaken by the all graceful God owing to his own short comings. It is only on occasions when he felt that he had a mission to perform, that he thought of the world and assumed the role of a Teacher and imparted divine wisdom in magnificent, dignified, and soul stirring expressions.

7. (24) During the dark period, though there were various conflicting schools of religious thought, Buddhism and Jainism seem to have been the chief rivals and combatants. At first Buddhism held the ground and later lost it, when the Pallavas began to assert themselves, defeating the kalappiras. At the close of the 6th century the Jain missionaries dominated Tamizhakam in every walk of life, having great influence with the kings like Mahendra Varma in the North and Arikesari in the South.

7. (25) The Jains adopted a negative attitude towards life and pursued the virtue of kindness to living beings to the extreme of absurdity. They hated music and dance; classed married life as sinful, abstained from washing themselves and lighting lamps. The supreme penance for them was to inflict hardships on themselves like lying on the slabs of stone under the burning sun etc. For them this was the only way of getting rid of the birth causing sins. They would not allow freedom of

religious thought and practice. It was under these conditions (early 7th century A. D.) that Sambandar, along with Appar, rose like the glorious Sun, by divine grace, in the horizon of Tamil Nad.

7, (26) These two great Saintly seers spoke and acted dauntlessly taking firm stand on their own spiritual experience. They sang sublime songs of celestial music reflecting the transcendent Siva in concrete form. They possessed both the sanctity of divine grace and sublimity of poetic excellence. The songs were the outpourings of the bliss of the Supreme and the splendour of Divine Grace which the saintly sages experienced and embraced.

They travelled with thousands of devotees through-out the length and breadth of the Tamil Nad and revived and re-established Saivism in the hearts of the masses. Temple worship was the chief means of meeting the people of the cities, towns and villages. Temple was not a mere place of worship, but it was the natural and eternal residence of the Supreme Being, the God of the gods and the King of the kings.

For the people, Tirujnanasambandar, the young child, was God's son and Tirunavukkarasar was a grand old man of mature practical wisdom devoted to God. Both of them were the representatives of Siva, the Supreme. So in their very presence neither the Jains nor the lingering Buddhists could hold to themselves or wield any influence over the people or with the ruling classes. Mahendravarma in the North took kindly towards Saivism, being influenced by the undaunted courage and magnificent example of Tirunavukkarasar. In the South, Arikesari left Jainism and became devoted to Saivism by the divine precepts imparted to him by Tirujnanasambandar.

(c) The Golden age :

7. (27) In this manner the challenge from the Buddhistic and Jain missionaries was met. There was revival of Saivism and along, with it the

revitalization of the Tamil language, literature, culture, arts, civilisation, and the very Tamil way of living.

7. (28) Vedas and Aqamas came to be studied and Vedic rites were performed as a part of temple worship consistent with vegetarianism. We may note that the two great teachers, Sambandar and Appar, were for emotional integration of the Tamils with the people of Aryan persuasion. They did not hate Sanskrit. Appar refers to Siva as 'Ariyan as well as Tamizhan'.* Sambandarsays "Siva rules Accirupakkam while Tamil language and Sanskrit language come under His feet".** Saivism assumed the appellation "Vaidika Saivam".

7. (29) Towards the end of the 8th century, Sundarar was in the lime light. He followed the footsteps of Sambandar and Appar. He sang in Tamil at the temples sanctified by his forerunners, and extended his message to the western parts of the Tamil Nad. His life and inspirational songs brought to the fore the idea among the Tamils that the Supreme Spirit, Siva, moved closely with his devotees and conferred on them not only divine wisdom and Supreme Bliss, but also wealth and pleasures of the world, that He is not only a strict moral governor, but also a forgiver of sins, and that He not only subjects us to the discipline of moral law, but also absolves us of our egoistic actions.

7. (30) Sundarar made it explicit that devotion to God implies devotion to His devotees as well. This religious concept was given formal expression in one of his hymns known by the name Tiru-T-Tonda-T-Togai

* ஆரியன்கண்டாய், தமிழன் கண்டாய்

— Appar, 6, 23, 5.

‡ தமிழ்ச்சொலும் வடசொலும் தான் நிழல் சேர

... ..

அச்சிறுபாக்கமது ஆட்சிகொண்டாரே.

— Sambandar, 1, 77, 4.

It mentions sixty illustrious saints, each with his or her characteristic service, and pays tributes to them. The hymn includes in the roll nine classes of devotees whose services to Siva are to be recognised and honoured. Since the name of the author of the hymn along with names of his parents finds mention in it, the number of the recognised saints is always given as sixty three. This hymn is the primary source for the celebrated original Tamil epic Tiru-t-tondar Puranam, which is popularly known as Periyapuranam.

7. (31) Now it will be clear why the saintly trio are given priority of mention. The first two saints definitely saved and re-established the Saiva-Siddhanta way of life, whereas the third added force to it by popularising it still further. Also Tevara hymns are musical compositions. Tiruvacakam and Tirukkovaiyar are purely literary ones. It is held that the musical compositions are more pleasing to Siva.

7. (32) The four saints Sambandar, Appar, Sundarar and Manikka-vacakar are held as the Teachers of the religion, since they had vanquished the unwhole-some creeds and re-established Saivism.

(d) Consolidation:

7. (33) It will be seen that Saiva-Siddhanta system of thought has no founder. It is not based on the spiritual experiences of a single individual, but on the intuitions and God-consciousness of a number of seers and mystics who had realised the presence of the Supreme-Being in their heart of hearts and had given expression to it. These are called Nayanmars, men of leading thought. So, towards the end of the 9th century, savants of Saivism grouped, by common consent, the most authoritative and unimpeachable records of genuine intuition and experience, for the benefit of the future generations. Such a grouping finds expression for the first time from the mouth of Avvaiyar. She was a venerable, erudite and pious lady. She seems to have taken uncommon

interest in fostering the minds of children as well as grown up ones with wholesome thoughts and impressions. She prescribes the following, immortal works for study, reflection, and worthy practice.

“Thirukkural written by Devar, the end of the Vedas viz., Upanishads, the tamil hymns of the saintly trio, Tiru-k-kovaiyar and Tiruvacakam uttered by Vatauvur Munivar, Tirumantira malai of Tirumular, these are the expressions of the same eternal truths and the world will never discard them” •

7. (34) The Cozha king Rajaraja - I (10th cent.) was interested in collecting all the Tevara hymns and preserving them. He wished to know the life history of the sixty three canonised saints. He sought the help of Nambiandar nambikal; who got enlightenment through the grace of Ganesa of Tiru-naraiyur. The latter found the Tevara hymns at Chidambaram temple and compiled them into seven sacred books. These as a whole are called Adangal Murai, the books complete.

7. (35) The hymns of Sambandar form the first three books. those of Appar form the fourth, fifth, and sixth books and Sundarar's hymns constitute the seventh book.

7. (36) Later the said NambiAndar added Tiruvacakam and Tiru-k-kovaiyar as the eighth book.

7. (37) After Sundarar many learned men from different social and religious groups, including royal families, became devoted to Siva and obtained enlightenment. Twelve such mystic saints had sung of the

* தேவர் குறளும் திருநான் மறைமுடிவும்
முவர் தமிழும் முனிமொழியும் — கோவை
திருவா சகமும் திருமூலர் சொல்லும்
ஒருவா சகம்என்று உணர்.

praise of Siva in musical compositions, like the Tevara hymns. These were arranged and placed as the Ninth book. Tirumantira Malai was classed as the Tenth Book. There had been produced forty classical literary compositions by saints and sages who had lived during the period ranging from the third century to the eleventh century. They were arranged chronologically and assigned the place of the eleventh book. Of these, ten were the works of Nambi Andar Nambikal.

7. (38) Towards the close of the 11th century these Eleven Books (called Tirumuraikal - Celestial books) were regarded as the authoritative texts on Siva Siddhanta by common consent of the savants of Saivism, with the royal assent. Raja Raja - I and his son Rajendran were the moving spirit and Nambi Andar Nambikal was the author of this momentous compilation. By virtue of his erudition, enlightenment, devotion, and God-directed activity Nambi Andar Nambikal is regarded as the Southern counterpart of Veda Vyasa.

7. (39) The most important feature to be noted is that all the activities detailed so far were in the full lime light of history.

7. (40) There was yet one more crying need. The eleven Books give the highest philosophy of life mixed up with the close religious, and personal relation with the Absolute of Philosophy presented in the form and name of Siva, so that men could worship and adore, and lead a pure righteous life. But still an historical account of the lives of saints with some details to serve as ideals for ordinary men was yet to come.

7. (41) Saint Sundarar had sown the seed in Tiru-t-tondattogai and Nambi Andar Nambikal had fostered it in the form of a literary composition in the name Tiru-t-tondar-Tiruvandati. This has to grow into a mighty tree with flowers and sweet fruit. This was inimitably achieved by Cekkizhar in the 12th century. He was full of erudition and devotion, with a keen eye to discern truth. He was humble and saintly but could

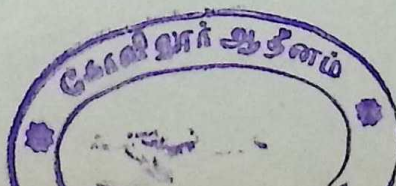
rise to great heights, when occasion required. He was friend, guide, philosopher, and the chief minister to Kulottunga-II (known as Anabaya Cozhan). At the request of the king, he went to Chidambaram, got inspiration, direction and guidance from Nataraja, the Cosmic Dancer, and gave the great original Tamil Epic of exquisite beauty, of the name Tiru-t-Tondar Puranam. It records the lives, works, behaviour, and attainments of the sixty three Unmai Nayanmars (historical and true leaders of life-divine) celebrated in Tiru-t-tonhattogai. The saints whose religious and spiritual experiences are recorded in the great Epic are historic persons, who have left foot-prints on the sands of time, which can help and guide humanity in its voyage over the storm-tossed ocean of life towards the ultimate goal. They belonged, it should be noted, to various social groups, at different periods of history in South India (Tamil Nad), from the 3rd to the 9th century of the Christian Era. They had varied domestic, social, moral, and economical environments, and pursued varied avocations, among them there were kings and peasants, the rich and the poor, the organizers and the labourers, philosophers and laymen, the ascetics, the married and the unmarried men, women and children. But all of them lived the life-divine and won the grace of God. The great work in Tamil is a very valuable source of Tamil history, besides being a source of religious, psychological, and philosophical truths.

7. (42) This work was accorded by the wise men of the time, with the royal consent, the edifying status of being the Twelfth Book, the concluding one of the twelve celestial Books.

7. (43) These twelve sacred Books (Tirumuraikal) which are special ones together with Tiru-k-kural, the Book of the Books, are self-sufficient and self-consistent sources of the Saiva-siddhanta school of thought.

9. Sources and foundation texts in Sanskrit:

8. (0) The sources and foundation texts for Saiva-Siddhanta are found not only in Tamil but also in the most ancient Sanskrit literature.



8. (1) After the advent of the saintly trio, there was revival of the study of the Vedas and Agamas. Since Vedic literature is a complex mixture of hymns on various gods, myths, and legends, it is not easy to distinguish the kernel from its husk. So it gave rise to diverse views, religions and schools of thought. Savants of Sanskrit studies were sharply divided with regard to the purport of the Vedas. Apart from the six systems that are well recognised, the Vedanta system came to be interpreted in different ways. Consequently, there were disputations about words, meanings, and the implications. The dispute centred round Vedanta Sutras which are also called Brahma Sutras. There emerged three schools of Vedanta thought. They are the Kevaladvaita, the Vicishtadvaita and the Bhedavada. The principal teachers of these systems are Sankara of the late 8th century, Ramanuja of the 11th century, and Madhva of the early 14th century.

8. (2) The saivites do not follow any of these teachers or their systems. When they speak of Vedanta, they mean only the Upanishads. They mean neither the Vedanta Sutras nor any of their commentaries.

8. (3) There is a school of thought derived from the Brahma sutras and the Upanishads consistent with the purport of the Saiva Agamas. The expounder of that system is Srikanta Accarya or Nilakanta Civaccarya. That school is very close to the Saiva Siddhanta system. It is called Civadvaita system. The date of Srikantaccarya is generally taken to be prior to that of Sankara.

8. (4) As an attempt at detailed discussion of the Vedas and Agamas is beyond the scope of this paper, some important topics are chosen and dealt with hereunder.

8. (5) Once when we set our foot in Sanskrit literature we enter a contraversial region and we are obliged to use dialectics peculiar to the mediaeval scholastics. The following exposition contains some of the logical arguments used by the saivites.

(a) The God-head:

8. (6) The Saiva-Siddhanta system presents a noble and lofty conception of the God-head, which is both the Absolute of philosophy and the God of religion whom men can love and adore. Rig-veda firmly and conclusively lays the foundation for the concept of the Supreme Being personified as Rudra-Siva, both in the transcendent and in the immanent aspect.

8. (7) We often hear the familiar quotation 'Ekam Sat Vipra Bahudha Vadanti' from the Rigveda. It means, 'The Supreme is one, which the learned speak as many'. Scholars trained in the ideology of Sankara's Philosophy would take it to mean, 'Existence is one etc., because Sanskrit dictionary gives the meaning of the word Sat as existence. But the context and tradition would prove beyond doubt that the earlier interpretation is the correct one.

8. (8) A fuller reading of the passage is 'Indram mitram varunam agnim ahur atho divyassa suparno Garutman-Ekam Sat vipra bahudha vadanthi.' Its meaning is clearly this:- The Supreme is one, which the learned speak, in many ways, as Indra, Mitra, Varuna, Agni, the beautiful divya Garuda.'

8. (9) The word Sat in this context can only denote and mean the changeless intelligent principle which lies behind the changing world, i. e., the Supreme Being, which rules and governs the various manifestations of Nature.

The Great world poet and law-giver, Saint Tiruvalluvar, uses two Tamil words to convey the implication of the Vedic term Sat. They are (1) Ullatu (that which is permanent) and (2) Semporul (immutable entity).

8. (10) This Rig-vedic text gets itself repeated in slightly different forms in the Yajur Veda, and Svetasvatara, Candogya and other principal

Upanishads. In the Yajur Veda and in the Svetasvatara it occurs in the form, "Eko hi Rudro na dvitayaya tastuh" (Rudra is one only, he does not stand as the second). In Candogya, the form is 'Sad eva Saumyedaṁ agra asid-ekam eva advitiyam' — (My good boy, the Supreme alone was before this,—[i. e., before the creation of the world.] one only, not the second).

So a correct appreciation of the full implication of the oft-quoted Rig-vedic text will be necessary and fundamental for a real insight into the unity of thought or the philosophy that must underlie the whole range of Vedic literature in general.

8. (11) With this end in view, I cannot do better than quote what the late M. Nallaswami Pillai, the well informed pioneer interpreter of Saiva-Siddhanta wrote, sixty years ago, in his thoughtful paper on 'The Saiva Religion and Saiva Advaita Siddhanta philosophy'.

He writes;— 'The Supreme polity of the Veda is Sacrifice. Various gods, Indra, Vayu, Varuna, Agni, Hiranyagarbha, Soma, the Sun, the Moon, Vishnu and Rudra are worshipped. Each is addressed as a most powerful deity, and his aid is invoked for all kinds of earthly blessings and freedom from evil. They are all supposed to represent various powers of nature, and to idealize man's aspiration after the Supreme. Then we meet "Ekam Sat Vipra Bahudha Vadanti", and who is this one? Was anyone god recognised, above all others, as the Chief, as the God of Sacrifices, as the Pati? And we have the following texts from the Rig-Veda etc., etc.

8. (12) I need not attempt to quote texts. Suffice it to say that from the various hymns one can clearly conclude that the mightiest and the most leading among the Rig Vedic Rishis have given us from their spiritual experience and God-consciousness, an integrated concept of the God-head and revealed its spiritual manifestation in the name and form

of Rudra-Siva. The form described is almost the same as has continued to be worshipped and meditated on till today by the Saivites.

8. (13) Rudra is derived by Sayana from the roots rut, dravayiti, meaning one who drives away sorrow or misery. Sayana takes the word Soma to mean Sa-uma, One who is with Uma. He also deduces the stories of Tripura Samhara and Vishapaharana, the destruction of the three wandering strong holds and the drinking of the deadly poison, from the texts of the Rig-Veda.

8. (14) Again in the Yajur-Veda, Rudra-Siva is well established as Pasupati, Lord of sacrifices and hymns, and the one without a second. It is well known that Sri Rudram of the Yajur Samhita describes the Supreme in His two aspects of Law and Love. He wears the aspect of Law to punish transgressors of His commands, and that of Love to redeem those who obey, love, and adore Him. He is thus both Rudra and Siva. He is the Creator, Law giver, Moral Governor, and Redeemer.

8. (15) Now it will be very interesting to note that Saint Manikka-vacakar speaks of Lord Siva as "Oruvan ennum Oruvan Kanka" (Behold! He is one spoken of as the One). This is indeed a reminiscence of the upanishadic as well as the Vedic dictum viz., "Rudra indeed is the one only; He does not stand as the second."

8. (16) Again, the most remarkable thing is that the avowedly great Vaishnavite Saint Nammazhvar should admit this very high compliment to Siva. In his sacred utterance (Thiruvoy mozhi—3, 4, 7) he refers to Siva as 'Oruvan enretta ninra nalirmatic-cadaiyan enko,' — Shall I say (of my mysterious Kanna) that he is the Lord of the cool matted-hair, decked with crescent moon, who stands to be praised as The One.

8. (17) This is proof positive how great Saints of the old respected the Vedic tradition of identifying the Supreme or the Absolute of Philosophy

with Lord Siva and with no other God and how this tradition is kept alive in Saiva Siddhanta till now.

8. (18) I can quote passages from sacred scriptures, as well as classic works of Tamil and Sanskrit to show, how the name and form of Siva have always referred to the Supreme Being, who is the first cause of the entire Universe, who transcends the spatio-temporal Universe and the very consciousness-force of the individual self, who has no birth and death, and whose grace and realisation alone will lift the individual self above the vicious circle of birth and death. But space forbids.

8. (19) One thing I am strongly inclined to say. It is that the loftiness and the pristine purity and glory of the God-head conceived or discovered by the mighty mystics of the old, have been kept alive intact only in the system of Saiva Sidhanta.

(b). The Descent of Lord or the concept of Avatara :

8. (20) Saiva-Siddhanta does not accept the doctrine of avatara in the sense in which Bhavatgita seems to lay down and the Vaishnavite Azhvars seem to have accepted.

Evolution is intended for the soul's spiritual growth and its ultimate salvation. The only way in which one can distinguish between the Supreme Being and the individual selves is that the Supreme does never get Himself entangled in the law of Karma and in birth and death, whereas the individual selves, being bound up with the spiritual darkness, are subject to the process of evolution governed by the law of Karma. So, if the doctrine of avatara is accepted, i. e., if it is accepted that the Lord will be born in flesh and blood in any of the four categories of creation and the seven varieties of birth, then the Supreme is brought down to the level of the suffering multitude of the souls, and there is no rational means of ascertaining which the Lord's avatara is and which not.

For almost any virtuous man's life will have the claim to be the Lord's avatara. Moreover, such a God will fail to have the lofty attributes of the Lord as stated in the Srutis, such as the One, not being the second.

8. (21) In this connection, it is remarkable that the vast Puranic literature is singularly free from attributing birth or death to Lord Siva, and it is the well-established tradition among all the Tamil poets not to compose Pillai-k-kavi or Pillai-t-tamizh in praise of Lord Siva, as it will be derogatory to His greatness.

8. (22) Pillai-k-kavi is one of the 96 forms of Tamil composition. A deity or a great man will be treated as a child-darling and be praised and felicitated in the particular kind of composition.

8. (23) It is noteworthy that Silappadikaram refers to Lord Siva as Pirava Yakkai-p-Periyon (The great Lord who is not born, in flesh and blood subject to the classification of the four categories and seven varieties). His form is a spiritual one, assumed by His own Gracious free will.

8. (24) The Vedas speak of Lord Siva as Visvadhika (one who transcends the Universe), Visvakarana (the cause of the Universe), Visvarupi (one who has the Universe as his form), and Visvantaryami (The indweller and the prime source of motion and action of the Universe). All these ideas are represented by His Form and its accessories and are also illustrated by means of puranic stories such as Linga Purana.

8. (25) Gugai Namaccivaya Devar, a saint who had his abode at Tiruvannamalai asserts: "We learn free from doubt from the compositions of poets that all deities are subject to birth and death; but we haven't heard even in the form of spurious stories that the Isa of Arunai had ever been born in a house or had ever lived taking food and died."

8. (26) In this connection it is noteworthy that the author of Tolkappiyam, the earliest extant work in Tamil, does not mention Siva as

a karupporul of one of the four or five geographical divisions of the land, even as he mentions Ceyon, Mayon, Varunan and Vendan. In my considered opinion, this is because Lord Siva was never considered to be a creature of geographical and temporal conditions. I believe and I am convinced that Tolkappiar means by Kadu Vazhttu of Kanji Tinai the praise of the everlasting aspects of Lord Siva, which are implied in his name Sudalai Adi (The dancer on the cremation ground). The term Kadu (cremation ground) metonymically refers to the Lord of the cosmic dance, as otherwise there will be no purpose in celebrating the mere burial or cremation ground. Also the first poem in Kali-t-togai seems to be in praise of Lord Siva, as the author of all absorption and giver of eternal bliss, illustrating the topic of Kadu vazhttu.

(c) The Spiritual Form of the Lord and revelations :

8. (27) This naturally leads us to the consideration of the question as to how the Lord helps humanity at times of crisis.

8. (28) The Supreme is essentially spiritual and so formless. But still there is hankering on the part of the man to have personal relation with Him, and to love and adore Him. So it is held in Saiva-Siddhanta that the Supreme, being light, love, and bliss reveals Himself to the matured soul.

We have unquestionable internal evidence to this effect in the sacred utterings of the four great Saiva Saints, Manikkavacakar, Sambandar, Appar and Sundarar. They are all historic persons and the detailed accounts of their lives and works are supported by ample reliable evidences.

8. (29) The Lord appears before them either in the human form or in the form divine and makes them purified and perfected souls. They remember and meditate on the spiritual form that was vouchsafed to them. Thus establishing themselves in tune with the Infinite, they move

about in the world as God-men, guiding humanity in the path of virtue and enlightenment. The inspired utterings of these God-men or the spiritual leaders are our Vedas or Revelations.

8. (30) As per Tamil tradition, only such perfected souls are entitled to produce original or Primary Scriptures, not others. This is God's descent in the abode of men.

This descent is not confined to anyone single person for all times as the Christians would maintain, nor is it the birth of the Lord in flesh and blood in anyone category of the lives on the earth as the Vaishnavites would have it.

So Revelations or Scriptures are not confined to anyone place, age or language according to Saiva-Siddhanta. If only the fanatics, religious, linguistic, racial or cultural, could realise this eternal truth and allow the common man to choose his own spiritual leader and scripture, how happy the world will be!

8. (31) Umapati Sivacarya says: 'All scriptures said to be ancient are not of unmixed good, nor are all the present day books bad ones'. By this he means to emphasise the need for the rational examination of everything without allowing sentiment and prejudice to creep into our thoughts.

(c) The wide area of Scriptural authority recognized by the system:

8. (32) Now it is helpful to remember that, barring certain portions of the Vedas which seem to be expressive of racial prejudice, conflict and antagonism, the Vedic hymns as a whole are not merely poetic compositions, but revelations expressing eternal truths realised by pure and perfect souls in their super-sensuous perception. Again since the Upanishads are the natural consummation of the Vedic Scriptures, there can be no contradiction between the Upanishads and the Vedas.

8. (33) This view is characteristic of and peculiar to Saiva-Siddhanta. While the three Preceptors (Māda - Acaryas), Sankara, Ramanuja and Madhva would lean on the Prasthanā Traiṇya alone for authority, Saiva preceptors do not thus limit or narrow down the area of the scriptural authority. They unreservedly lean on the authority of the Vedas, Saiva Āgamas, Tirukkural in Tamil and the inspired utterings of the great saintly seers such as Manikkavācakar, Tirumular, Appar, Sambandar and Sundarar.

8. (34) It may be mentioned here that Sankara, by limiting his scriptural authority to the Prasthanā Traiṇya, had, in effect, cut off his philosophy from its Vedic roots on the one hand and the cool sheltering foliage of the Upabrahmana (i. e., Pūanas) on the other, with the result that it stood like a bare stump and it was thus completely isolated from both the earlier and the later strata of the sacred Scriptures and failed to catch the golden string that runs through the pearls of Vedic and Upanishadic expressions and evolve a philosophy that would have been useful in day-to-day life.

8. (35) His theory is based on the hypothesis that all we perceive or conceive are mere appearances, not real, including the individual self that so perceives and conceives. So, since perception and inference cease to be valid means of correct knowledge, he would lean on Sruti. There he would not take into consideration the whole of the Vedas or even of the Upanishads. Even among the texts of his favourite Upanishads he would take only those that seem to establish the identity of the soul with the Supreme as valid, and not others that plainly say that there are glorious attributes to the Supreme and that there are immortal souls.

8. (36) The latter texts are uttered, he would explain, from the stand-point of Vyavakarika, which is unreal.

8. (37) Again he will prescribe Sadanas for the attainment of his goal, which are real only from the standpoint of his unreal vyavakarika.

Thus his system of thought is faced with difficulties and doubts from top to bottom and his theory does not accord with the practical side of his own system.

10. Philosophic literature of the System :

9. (0) Tirumantiram, which forms the tenth Book of the twelve sacred ones, is the first work on philosophy in Tamil; but it is a composite work which includes an epitome of ethics and rituals. There are in it devotional songs and stories of the saints and God's acts as well.

This book gives the names of the Spiritual Teachers consecrated and installed as masters of the mystic science by Siva. Tirumular himself is one among the eight masters, whose spiritual heritage is traced to Siva through His direct disciple, Tiru Nandi Devar.

9. (1) In the 12th century there were many Saiva Mutts propagating Saiva Siddhanta religion and philosophy. One of them was the Golakⁱ Mutt at Tiruvotriyur near Madras. The head of that Mutt was an erudite and devoted scholar, well-versed in Tamil and Sanskrit. To meet the needs of his time, he produced a work by name Inanamirtam in 75 Akavals. It gives a succinct and carefully arranged account of the knowledge portions of the Sivagamas. The stanzas are written in the classic sangam style. Sivajnana Munivar, the author of the famous Sivajnana mapadiyam (commentary), copiously quotes from this work.

9. (2) In the year 1047 A. D. a great spiritual teacher wrote a Book, in 45 triplets for the benefit of his disciple Aludaiyar. The name of the teacher is Uyyavanda Devar. He dwelt with his disciple in Tiruvisalur on the southern Bank of the Kaviri. The name of the Book is Tiru Undiyar. It gives an account of the author's own spiritual experiences. In form it is similar to the 14th poem of Tiruvacakam of the same name. In content, it gives the very essence of the Tamil Vedas without touching upon the contraversial creeds of the diverse schools.

9. (3) The following renderings of three triplets will disclose the characteristic of the work : *

" The formless Unknown came with form,
And made me become It itself. "

" This my deed and this I eschewed,
All my deeds are deeds of His :
For He hath given Himself to me. "

" This if becometh He, it's His grace ;
Say ! this soul can't become He ;
For the soul is ever a soul. ". *

9. (4) Tiru-k-kadavur Uyyavanda Devar was the disciple of Aludaiyar. He was the author of the work Tiru-k-kalitruppadiyar. This is a brief commentary, in verse, on the above work. Its date is 1077 A. D. It has 100 stanzas of Venba meter. It gives an account of the path of realisation and clearly states the nature of God-men, who attain the static as well as the dynamic identity (harmony) with the inner presence. It deals with the preparatory steps of Siva Dharma, Adara Yoga, Niradara Yoga and Sivjnana in some detail. It expounds the dual aspect of the God-Head, viz., Civam and Cakti, and the relation between soul and God.

* அகளமாய் யாரும்அறிவரி தப்பொருள்
சகளமாய் வந்ததென் றுந்தீபற ;
தானாகத் தந்ததென் றுந்தீபற.

நஞ்செயல் அற்றிந்த நாமற்றபின் நாதன்
தன்செயல் தானேயென் றுந்தீபற ;
தன்னையே தந்தானென் றுந்தீபற.

அவன்இவன் ஆனதவன்அரு ளாலல்லது
இவன் அவன் ஆகான்என் றுந்தீபற ;
என்றும் இவனேயென் றுந்தீபற.

— Tiru-Undiyar, l. 6. 40.

It quotes from Tiru-k-kural, Tevaram, and Periyapuranam for scriptural authority and illustration of saintly life. It also deals with the true import of the grand expressions (Maha vakyas) like 'Tatvam asi' (That thou art).

Tiru Undiyar and Tiru-k-kalitruppadiyar are Tamil Upanishads, in the true sense of the term.

9. (5) Early in the 13th century, Saint Meykandar appeared as the rising sun in the firmament of the philosophic world. His unique work Sivajnana Bodham is the very synthesis of Truth. It turns the minds of the scholastics from the dispute about words to the discernment of things.

The work, in 12 Sutras of 40 lines, is a compendium of the world of philosophic wisdom of the Upanishads as well as the Agamas. It reduces the discussion of all the problems of life into 39 propositions and expresses them in appropriate groups in the form of the 12 Sutras.

These are called Siddhanta Sutras, and they cover completely the ground covered by the Vedanta Sutras. But still they are precise, perspicuous, unambiguous and clear. These Sutras brought light, grace, love and bliss to the Tamils.

9. (6) Saint Meykandar imparted spiritual wisdom to 49 disciples. One of them was Arulnandi Sivacariyar, the family priest of Meykandar.

Though he was an intellectual giant with profound scholarship, he sat at the feet of Meykandar and obtained the torch of spiritual wisdom from him. He passed it on to Marai-jnanasambandar, from whom Umapati Sivaccariyar obtained it.

Saint Arulnandi Devar wrote a commentary in verse on Sivajnana Bodham, in the name Sivajnana Siddhiar. He also composed a literary composition called Iru-pa-irupahtu, in praise of his spiritual master plying him with questions.

Sivajnana Siddhiar comprises two parts; the first enunciates and criticises the doctrines of twelve outer systems of thought. Whereas the second part deals elaborately with the principles of Saiva-Siddhanta.

This is a digest of the content of the knowledge portions of Agamas, along with the lines indicated by Sivajnana Bodha Sutras. So, it is the touch-needle for the correct interpretation of Agamic texts,

Its special importance can be seen from the remark made by Guru Inanasambandar, the Founder of Dharmapuram Adhinam. He says, in his great work Siva Bhoga Caram, 'It is enough to know and practise half the stanza of Siddhi rather than look into the wide field of philosophic literature in the world.'

Naturally a number of commentaries came to be written on it and Dharmapuram Adhinam has made its own unique contribution. Guru Inanasambandar himself wrote notes of expansion on the original text. This is called Inana Avarana of Siddhiyar. - Fortification of Wisdom of Siddhiyar. Later a Scholar Saint of the Adhinam Sri Velli Ambalavana Muniyar wrote a commentary by way of elucidation of the notes. This all inclusive elucidative Commentary is known as Inana Avarana Vilakkam of Siddhiyar, the Light on the Fortification of Wisdom.

9. (7) Another disciple of Meykandar, Manavacakam Kadantar of Tiru Adhikai, composed a dialogue in venba meter on the purport of the Saiva-Siddhanta Philosophy. The name of the work is Unmai Vilakkam.

9. (8) Saint Umapati Sivacaryar lived in the early years of the 14th century. He produced eight works in Tamil besides many others in Tamil and Sanskrit.

The names of the eight books are: Sivaparakasam, Tiruvarut-payan, Vina-Venba, Potripahrodai, Kodikkavi, Nenju Vidu Tutu, Unmai-neri vilakkam and Sanakrpa Nirakarnaam.

Tiru Undiar, Tirukkalitruppadiyar, Sivajnana Bodham, Sivajnana Siddhi, Irupe Irupey, Unmaivilakkam and the eight works of Umapati Devar together constitute the most authoritative works on Saiva-Siddhanta. These are called Meykanda Nulka or Siddhanta Castas. They are fourteen in number.

11. Lines of Spiritual Teachers :

10. (0) It has already been mentioned in connection with Tirumantiram in para 9(0) that the said work gives the names of eight spiritual masters who got instructions from Tiru Nandi Devar. Each one of them perpetuated his line of spiritual descendants and preserved the secret doctrine and spread the Wisdom Divine among the worthy disciples.

10. (1) One among them is Sanatkumarar of Upanishadic and puranic fame. Candokya Upanishat at the end of its VII Adhyaya speaks of Sanatkumara and says, "They say he is Skanda, they say he is Skanda." Saint Meykanda Devar obtained the secret doctrine through Parancoti Munikal. This Parancoti Munikal was the disciple of Satyajnana Darsini, who was the disciple of Sanatkumara, who himself was a disciple of Tirunandi Devar.

So Meykandar, his disciple Arulnandi Devar, his disciple Marai Inanasambandar and his disciple Umapati Sivam are called "Santhana Acaryas" (lineal spiritual masters) of Tirukkayilaya paramparai (lineage of Tirukkayilai).

From Umapati Sivacariyar, the line of succession branched into two. One branch leads to Guru Inanasambandar, the founder of Dharmapuram Adhinam and the other to Namacivaya Desikar, the founder of Thiruvavaduturai Adhinam. The present Head of Dharmapuram Adhinam is the 25th Mahasannidhanam from the founder Saint.

12. Conclusion

11. (0) In conclusion, I wish to say that Saiva-Siddhanta is the only living philosophy of ancient Tamils which permeates into the daily life of the common man in South India. It has continued, from time immemorial, to govern and influence the Tamil language, literature, art and culture. It is the very moving spirit in the practical life of the people. The special concepts of the system and the forms of expression used in it have passed into the current thought and language of the people. The countless Siva temples in Tamil Nad are the repositories of religious symbols and forms of worship which are the visual expression of the System.

To cite a simple example, the Siva linga, the Nandi, and the Altar in the temple represent the Supreme Being (Pati), the released soul (Atma) and the bondage (the evil principle - Malam) respectively. Nandi, the Atma, turns away from the world, gets released from the bondage and directly perceives and enjoys the Supreme in the form of Effulgent Bliss. Nandi is only the shortened form of Anandi which means the rejoicing one.

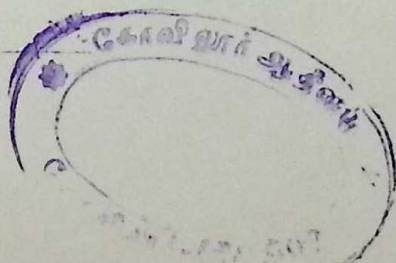
Both the Supreme and the world exist. If you turn towards light, the shadow leaves you and with it the objective world; if you turn away from light, you do not see the source of light and you are in the darkness of the shadow and see all things but light. In either case the individual self exists, at first in the state of bondage and finally in the released state. This is Saiva Siddhanta, pure and simple.

11. (1) Coming to the end of the paper, I feel, you will all agree with Dr. G. U. Pope in his observation, "The Saiva Siddhanta system is the most elaborate, influential, and undoubtedly the most intrinsically valuable of all the religions of India." If this small contribution of mine convinces and makes the learned delegates interested in this system of Philosophy and Religion, which is the very essence of Tamil culture, then I shall feel amply rewarded.

11. (2) Now it is for me to express my grateful thanks to His Holiness Kailai Sri-la-Sri Mahasannidanam of Dharmapuram Adhinam who has been graciously pleased to entrust the work of presenting and introducing the most ancient system of religio-philosophy in its true form to the learned delegates of the Second International Tamil Conference - Seminar in Madras on 3—1—1968 and the following days. Dharmapuram Adhinam is in the forefront in all the religious and cultural activities. In the matter of temple and other institutional administration, it is an accepted truth that the Adhinam has reached and maintains perfection. The publications made now and then of innumerable classic works with commentaries, Periodicals, and others to suit the needs and occasions are very valuable. They have richly contributed to the spread of knowledge in India and elsewhere.

For all these and many more, the public are deeply indebted to His Holiness. I offer my grateful thanks and humble homage and tributes at the feet of His Holiness, the Gurumahasannidhanam.

Vanakkam.



உ

குருபாதம்

சிவபோகம்

கண்டேனிப் பாசங் கழிந்தேன் அமுதைமுகந்
துண்டேன் சுகானந்தத் துள்ளிருந்தேன்—வண்டிமிர்காத்
தேனைப் பொழிகமலைச் செங்கமலப் பொற்பாத
ஞானப்ர காசனையே நான்.

Ecstasy

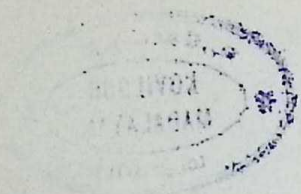
I saw Him. My bonds slipped off.
Nectar I scooped and drank.
I was in blissful ecstasy
I saw Jnanaprakas, Him of Kamalai
Whose gardens pour honey to the murmuring bees
Him with golden feet like lotus red.

—Gurujnanasambandar.



TIRATA

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A. A. A. I. I.